

REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 16, 25, 52-59 have been amended. Support for the changes to claims 16 and 25 can be found, *inter alia*, on page 12, lines 33-35 of the specification. Claims 52-55 have been amended merely to change their respective dependencies, and claims 56-59 have been amended to incorporate the essential features of claims 60-63, which have been canceled along with claims 34-41 and 48-51. Claims 1-15 were canceled previously and claims 66-70 stand withdrawn from consideration. Claims 16-33, 42-47, 52-59, 64, 65, 71 and 72 are presented for further examination.

Initially, the rejection of claims 34-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi, US 2002/0014666 (Ohmi I), in view of Wolf, Silicon Processing, Vol. 1 (Wolf I), Mintz, US 5,618,282 and Kern, Handbook of Wafer Cleaning Technology, the rejection of claims 38-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi, Wolf I, Mintz and Kern in further view of Cohen, US 2002/0009892, and the rejection of claims 48-51 over Ohmi, Wolf I and Mintz in further view of Rossnagel, Handbook of Plasma Processing, have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

The rejection of claims 16-22, 25-31, 54, 55, 64, 65, 71 and 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi in view of Wolf, and further in view of Mintz, US 5,618,282 is respectfully traversed.

The present invention relates to a process for forming an insulating film (oxide or nitride film) on the surface of a substrate for an electronic device. As recited in independent claims 16 and 25, the process comprises cleaning the

substrate with plasma based on a first process gas, and then oxidizing (or nitriding) the substrate with plasma based on a second process gas comprising.

Pointedly, all of the claims require that the cleaning and oxidizing steps are conducted under the same operation principle and in the same vessel without exposure of the substrate to air. By conducting the film formation process in such a manner, the effects of organic contaminant removal and native oxide removal can be optimally maintained (see, e.g., page 12, line 23 through page 13, line 14 and page 21, lines 19-23 of the specification). Applicants submit that none of the cited references teach or suggest such a process. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 23, 24, 32, 33 and 56-59 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi, Wolf I and Mintz in further view of Wolf IV, the rejection of claims 52 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi, Wolf I and Mintz in further view of Ohmi, US 6,357,385 (Ohmi II), and the rejection of claims 60-63 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ohmi, Wolf I, Mintz and Wolf IV in further view of Hallyal, US 6,451,641 are respectfully traversed.

Claims 23, 24, 32, 33, 52, 53 and 56-63 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claims 16 and 25 and thus are patentable at least for the reasons that claims 16 and 25 are patentable.

In view of the foregoing, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

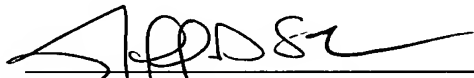
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If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #101249.55459US).

Respectfully submitted,

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